Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

MARGARET J. BARNHART

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

Initial interview date: May 7, 1998

[Note: This interview has not been edited by Ms. Barnhart]

Q: Today is the seventh of May 1998. This is an interview with Margaret J. Barnhart. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Well, let's start at the beginning. Could you tell me when and where you were born and something about your family?

BARNHART: Okay. I was born on May 22, 1928, in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, about 30 miles east of Pittsburgh, and I grew up initially being called Peggy or Peggy Joyce. It took me a long time to learn that I had an official name, Margaret. I graduated from Greensburg High School and then went to Goucher College, 1946, and graduated from Goucher College in 1950 with a major in international relations.

Q: Let me go back a bit. Could you tell me a bit about your parents?

BARNHART: My father at the time was a postman, Byron J. Barnhart; and my mother, Rhea Conway Barnhart, had been a schoolteacher, a profession she went back to when the children were gone. I had one brother, four years younger, who went to Purdue University, who went into ROTC, ended up as a Navy pilot, and died in an accident at sea in 1958. My father went into the jewelry business. He suffered a stroke in 1965. He was an invalid and eventually ended up in a nursing home. He died in 1985. My mother retired from teaching in June 1965. She became the head of household until 1987 when she became ill and went into an assisted living facility. She died in 1995, at age 94. And so my familial ties consist of cousins, one living in Washington, others scattered. Since 1995 I consider Washington, DC my residence.

Q: Tell me a bit about early school, elementary and high school.Were they both up in Pennsylvania?

BARNHART: In Greensburg, yes. We lived in an area of Greensburg called Southwest Greensburg. I went through elementary school and junior high school in Southwest Greensburg, and for my junior and senior years I went to Greensburg High School, which brought in people from different areas at that time.

Q: Is it a farming area mostly?

BARNHART: No. There was mining in the area, but it really wasn't really a farming area. Greensburg is 30 miles east of Pittsburgh and at times is wrongly considered to be within the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. It is a relatively self-contained small town with the usual shops and limited industry. It was a safe place in which to grow up.

Q: What about in high school? Did any subject particularly grab you?

BARNHART: I liked mathematics, and I thought I liked languages. When I went off to college, I was going to major in mathematics. I soon gave up that and decided to major in romance languages. I decided I did not have an aptitude for foreign languages. In my junior year, I settled on a major in international relations.

Q: I have the same problem. We were born in the same year. I was born about two months earlier, I was born in February '28. I got a wonderful lesson in geography by reading about World War II going on. Did you have that same feel for geography?

BARNHART: Not really. I don't know whether because it wasn't stressed too much in high school. I participated in various social activities, being that I was never much in the way of an active sports person myself. I went to football games, and had a good time through high school as I remember. In 1945-46, I applied to a number of colleges and universities - I remember to Stanford, Duke, Cornell, and Georgia Tech. I received a very nice letter saying sorry, we don't accept females. I had to find my own housing, because the veterans were just coming back. And my main point was that I decided I wanted to go out of state. I didn't go far. I went to Baltimore, Maryland, but it was out of Pennsylvania, and it was a girls' school then. I had accommodations there, and I really enjoyed four years there. I finally chose a non-coed girls' school - Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland.

Q: Tell me about Goucher.

BARNHART: It was a small liberal arts schools. It may have had between 600 and 800 students in all. It was just undergraduate and it was in the throes of moving its campus from Baltimore to Towson, Maryland. I lived in the one dormitory on the Towson campus. Goucher was considered to be a very good school academically. We were on a three-semester program, which meant 10 weeks and only three subjects. It was a good system, and you could concentrate on your three subjects. Of interest is the fact that I went back in 1981 to recruit for the Foreign Service, looking for women and minorities. The entire school is now on the Towson campus and is considerably larger than 30 years before when I graduated. It is co-ed, and it has a graduate program.

Q: Well, now, when you graduated in 1950, before that had you hearabout the Foreign Service or anything?

BARNHART: I knew nothing about the Foreign Service. My last semester at Goucher was as an international relations major. Four of us were selected to go to Washington one day a week for 10 weeks, and assignments were found for us in the Department of Education, as I remember. I interned at the Department of State in the UNESCO Relations Staff, and while there - and this was the last 10 weeks of my schooling - I met a very nice person at work who said, "Do you know what you're going to do when you graduate?" and I said, "I don't have a clue what I'm going to do when I graduate, but I will have to find work. I'd like to move out of the home. You know, I'm grown up now." It's a little bit different than today's world. But anyway, I wanted to get out. Not that I had any problems with my family. It just seemed time. I was offered a clerical job on the UNESCO Relations staff. I came to Washington a month after graduation to work in the State Department and live in Georgetown.

Q: Oh, yes. Although UNESCO wasn't itself involved, certainly the UN was just getting involved, and the Korean War was started in June of 1950.

BARNHART: The UNESCO Relations Staff. It was kind of the State Department office that would liaison with the UNESCO, UN/UNESCO office. It was very interesting. I wrote a paper on world universities for them, and I also went to several conferences in New York. After several temporary assignments, such as at the Bureau of European Affairs and the Committee on Tariff and Reciprocity, I ended up in the public affairs area and subsequently was tenured. At this point, I still didn't know anything about the Foreign Service.

Q: What sort of things were you dealing with? Really from about,what, '51 to '55 you were doing public affairs?

BARNHART: Yes, '51-'54, really. Initially I worked feature press, not in the news office but the one that dealt with digging up material for magazines, and I remember one thing that was very interesting. King Features, I believe it was. I'm not certain. My memory is getting worse and worse. It was a syndicate.

Q: A syndicate which would distribute comics and other things?

BARNHART: They also did feature articles. As for me, while in the Public Liaison office, I assisted in researching materials for feature press writers; I led student groups on tours of the Department; I assisted in locating speakers for programs around the country.

Q: I think it's interesting to note that this was often sort of the back door that many women came into the Foreign Service. They were getting college graduates as clerk-typists. It wasn't designed that way, but it did work out that way that women of our generation, this is how so many came in.

BARNHART: Yes, exactly. I remember, when I first came in, there was an intern group. I don't think there was a woman in that group. These were State Department interns - it's a junior professional level - and assigned around throughout the Department. I know, when I did recruiting, I would tell people who want to get into the Foreign Service or the State Department to start out as a clerk if you have no other way. However, I think graduates today just look down on it, yet it was a good way. But today there are more opportunities for entry at a professional level.

Q: With this Public Affairs office, did you have anything to do witCongress at all?

BARNHART: Not really.

Q: As you were taking groups around, you had to sort of take a quiccourse in learning what the State Department did, didn't you?

BARNHART: Oh, yes. From that I went on to the Speakers Bureau, which was also in Public Affairs. I became very familiar with the people in the department that gave briefings, because I would set up speakers to go throughout the United States on foreign policy matters. We had a wonderful person, Bob Gordon, up in the secretariat who gave sort of a global briefing. The assistant did most of the work putting out the then Foreign Service Journal, and she had to leave. She suddenly decided she wanted to go back home. She knew me. I was the last person. The one thing I never majored in was English. I hated it. Writing, I thought - ugh. But anyway, I went over and was interviewed by the director general, Ray Hare at the time, who thought I was just great. From 1954 until '62, when I went overseas, I was editor of the Foreign Service Newsletter. This was my first contact with Foreign Service. I worked for four directors general over a period of time.

Q: On the newsletter, could you explain what was the purpose of thnewsletter?

BARNHART: The purpose of the newsletter was to inform the people in the field of what was happening in the Department. The people in the field just didn't know what was going on. The Director General was more or less the person in charge of them. It was under Loy Henderson the whole time I was there pretty much. It started out in '47, as a typewritten letter. It was a letter, I believe, to Chiefs of Mission telling them matters that were happening that were of interest to them, such as where the inspectors were going, promotion lists, anything that they couldn't get in the newspapers. In 1950, the typewritten letter was transformed into the F.S. newsletter. It contained a transfer list, retirements, resignations, promotions, schedules of inspectors, schedules at FSI. Insofar as I could, I refused anyone that wanted to put a speech in or something that was going to be in Time magazine. We don't need that. I worked for some very, very nice Directors General, who let me do what I want. I want to know about representation allowances, salaries and expenses, but I don't need all that miscellaneous self-promoting business. I got away with it. It was wonderful. I kept telling Johnny Hayes and people, "No, you can't do this, and, no, I won't do that." I was my own boss, and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Q: When you're looking for secretaries and clerks for both the CiviService and the Foreign Service... Was it the Foreign Service too?

BARNHART: It was both.

Q: I was very much of the feeling that the secretarial corps, usually young women who were college graduates - and the State Department wasn't hiring many women as Foreign Service officers in those days - and so, in a way, several generations of Foreign Service families are a result of this because they either - particularly the secretaries - went into the Foreign Service themselves later on or they married into the Foreign Service. And this was not an era when it was easy to go overseas. It was pretty exciting to go overseas in those days.

BARNHART: And as I recall - I may be wrong about this - to even be considered for an overseas assignment, you had to have not only typing but you had to have shorthand. For Civil Service jobs, you could be a clerk-typist or a clerk-steno. We used tests given at the State Employment Offices. We would just set up office. Usually there were two of us, and we'd set up. But you're right, there were very, very, very few women that came directly into the Foreign Service. There weren't many, but through the exam route. But that did spark my interest in the Foreign Service, of course, working more and more closely with them and working where I did. Every Director General then was a wonderful person.

Q: Who were some of the Director Generals?

BARNHART: Raymond Hare was the first one, followed in succession by Waldemar Gallman, Joseph Satterthwaite, and Tyler Thompson. I went in the Foreign Service in 1961. Wanting originally to join the Staff Corps, I was told that I had no qualifications for the Staff Corps. Thus, I applied for the Foreign Service Reserve. By then I was interested in the Foreign Service of some sort, and I couldn't qualify for the Foreign Service Reserve. It was Loy Henderson who said, "Why don't you apply for lateral entry?" And he wrote a letter: I'm not telling you that you have to hire her or accept her, but....

Q: He was the top management person in the Department of State.

BARNHART: Yes, and he said, "You know, just see that she's examined, that's all," and so I went through a written and oral exam - not the written, but an essay written - and that was when I became a Foreign Service officer. But I didn't go overseas for about a year after that. I had fun too.

Q: Why?

BARNHART: This would have been when the Kennedy Administration camin.

Q: January '61.

BARNHART: '61, and they needed someone up at the US/UN Mission because Adlai Stevenson had been named Ambassador to the UN. Adlai Stevenson generated so much public relations, such as requests for autographs. They had rooms full of boxes of correspondence, and they didn't know what to do with it. So, I went up for six weeks' TDY and helped get that organized and had the fun of being there, going to all the staff meetings and seeing Eleanor Roosevelt, who came to most of them. I was there when the US/UN Mission moved from its old headquarters into the brand new office. It was about six or seven weeks of fun. And then I came back and I was staff aide to the Director General.

Q: This was Thompson by that time?

BARNHART: Yes. I was on the New Post Committee, I was secretary, taking notes. It was fun.

Q: Well, this was a pretty exciting time, because we were opening lot in Africa in those days.

BARNHART: Yes, and that's where Loy Henderson went over to visit, and a friend of mine, a secretary, Annabelle Mitchell, was the only female in that group.

Q: It was quite a famous trip, all over Africa with a group opeople who later became sort of the Africanists.

BARNHART: That's right. I think John Burns was on it. Throughout it all I just seemed to, I just loved it. I think part of the reason I stayed there. I was in Personnel briefly, because there was a travel freeze in 1962, and for all of us who were planning to leave in February or anytime up to July, travel was frozen. By then I knew I was going to Paris. I had already turned it down once, since I really wanted to go to somewhere exotic, but I went to Paris as a consular officer in 1962.

Q: How did Taylor Thompson operate as Director General from youperspective?

BARNHART: Well, I didn't see too much of him I was more staff aidfor Joe Satterthwaite.

Q: You were in Paris from when to when?

BARNHART: I was there from July 14, Bastille Day, '62 to November,October or November of '64.

Q: What type of work were you doing?

BARNHART: I was first assigned to the Visa Office over in the Talleyrand Building. I stayed there for a year, and then I wanted to do Welfare Whereabouts work, but they didn't like women to do that. However, they let me do it, and so then I spent the second year doing, first, Deaths and Estates. Three of us handled Deaths and Estates. Then, I moved into the straight Welfare Whereabouts, visiting jails. They didn't think women could do that. I think Mary Cabarini went later and said she was the first. I've been to all those jails.

Q: Let's start with the visa type. Were there mostly French, owere there other people who were in jail?

BARNHART: They were mostly French. I did immigrant visa work to begin with. I spoke some French by then, learning it through the FSI. I had an excellent staff of French nationals who were of great assistance.

Q: NATO, we had troops in France in those days?

BARNHART: Yes, we did, but we didn't have access. Eventually we haaccess to PX but basically we didn't see much of the military there.

Q: I was just thinking that this would generate a certain amount ovisas.

BARNHART: Didn't really. There were a few, but nothing like some othe other posts I went to, at that particular time.

Q: What about Welfare and Whereabouts? In the first place, Deaths and Estates. What sort of things, any particular cases or problems?

BARNHART: We cleaned out estates. I mean, we went through everything, and tried to get it before the local authorities. You would get a call, for example, that someone died in a hotel room. You go there immediately, console the widow or kick out the masseuse girl, if there is one, and collect the valuables. Those were just temporary chores. But there were a lot of Americans living in Paris and quite a bit of estates. Oh, there were different types of deaths. There was an American 21-year-old who was killed when someone jumped off the top of Notre Dame. We had to go right away and contact the family and so forth. It was a little messy. Essentially, we pick up all the effects that we can of these people, unless there is a next of kin right there. Also, we tracked down people. I can't remember all the things, but it was just very, very busy. I was there at the tail-end of the Orly airplane crash, so we were still settling some of those effects.

Q: This was a plane from the United States?

BARNHART: Yes, it was the Atlanta Group.

Q: It was the Atlanta Group, yes.

BARNHART: And it had crashed just before I arrived, so there were a lot of unclaimed things there still, and I dealt with that. They were not identified. There was a lot of jewelry and some money that Treasury - the burnt pieces of money they reimbursed or whatever it was. So there was a healthy amount left there that no one had claimed, so we sent notices out. And then it came to the point that it would have to go to the state of the deceased, which would be fine but there were one or two people on that plane who were from Ohio, and their family didn't agree that it would all go to Georgia. So we worked on things like that. Finally, as I recall, they all agreed that it would go to Georgia for a memorial, which it did. It was fascinating work. I loved it.

Q: I was just thinking that in France, in Paris particularly, in those days I would think you would have a certain number of particularly men living with some French woman or something with a wife back in the States, and trying to unsort those things.

BARNHART: I had one of those, a really bad one of those in Japan.

Q: We'll come to that.

BARNHART: I remember other deaths. Someone died alone in an apartment. I can't think who or the circumstances, but we sent back the effects to the family. The family said, "We were over visiting him, and we left a box of candy with him and you didn't send it back to us." We didn't see a box of candy. Even if we had, we probably wouldn't. We were responsible. We were a temporary conservatory of an estate. Someone training me said, "Don't even throw out paper bags, 'cause some people put money in paper bags, so you go through everything." And the only things I would ever dispose of were small items which would cause distress to the family. That really turned up in Tokyo. I don't know what you call them now - the transvestites, I guess. And also, I certainly would keep if there condoms in the wallet of a young kid or something, that sort of thing, or bloody clothing.

Q: I remember getting one with condoms which at the end were shaped in, I think, a rooster in one and Stalin with his mustache was the other.

BARNHART: Anything that would be an embarrassment was disposed of. In the Welfare Whereabouts section, I dealt with the tourists that came through, every day. I remember once two very nice young girls came in and needed money, and I sat them down. The way I handled most of these young kids was: "Well, now, isn't that nice? You're broke? (Yes.) Have you cashed in your return ticket? (Yes.) Your family told you you couldn't do this all by yourself? (Yes.) Let's call them." And sit them down, put in a long-distance collect call and try to get the family to send via American Express a ticket. We had a private group, American charities or something, who provided money for us to hand out in emergency cases, but I tried to get the family to do it. Sometimes it was sad. We had to tell nationals when we had a message someone had died, their mother, father. I kept Kleenex around, and all kinds of things. But I liked that work because you could help people.

And then, of course, there was the time - this was fun - when I came back from lunch and my secretary, a French girl, said, "Oh, look, Miss Barnhart, some man came in and gave me this little cosmetic bag with jewelry in it. He said he found it at the airport. It had dropped out of a suitcase, a piece of luggage." She hadn't opened it. I spread it out on my desk, and there were a lot of pearls and a lot of diamonds and some gold PT boats and shamrocks, and I though, uh oh, isn't that fun? What did I do next? So I looked at it all, and it was beautiful stuff, but I thought, well, this looks familiar, I mean in a sense. So I called the administrative office that handles the conference people, that handles VIP visitors. I didn't get into that too much, but Ethel Kennedy had been in town, and they said, "Oh, yes, what do you have?" I said, "Tell me who was in town." "Ethel Kennedy." I said, "Well, did she lose anything?" "Yes, we'll be right down." And I wouldn't give it to them. You know, I have it on my desk, it's my responsibility, I wasn't going to just hand it out. And so I had it identified. I had Mr. Van Cleef or Mr. Arpel, one of them, in saying, "I made this and this." And we got hold of Ethel Kennedy, and she called me from Switzerland. "Give him the jewelry. I'm so glad it's found. Give the jewelry to any pilot, because we're going on to Rome and I'd like to have it there." I ended up wrapping it up, sending it down through the classified pouch to the Ambassador. Actually it had been a robbery. There was one earring missing, which he apparently had taken to a jeweler, and the jeweler immediately became very suspicious because there had been a hotel jewelry robbery. So he panicked in thinking he had taken it out of the bag. She probably didn't lock her bag.

Q: How about Americans in jail in France? Did you have many othose?

BARNHART: Yes, not too many though. I remember visiting a couple of Americans in jai but not any great number. We had some poor veteran who kept - we repatriated him, I think, probably five times. He never could stay in one place long enough. He got a lot of disability checks, but they'd be in Marseilles when he was in Paris; they'd be in Paris when he was in Marseilles; and we kept sending them back. In those days if you were repatriated - you probably know - we had a stamp on your passport. You paid back or you didn't travel. And you always did pay it back. But it caused a lot of trouble. But those were days in Paris, and it was fun.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you were there?

BARNHART: Gavin was Ambassador when I first arrived. He wasucceeded by Charles Bohlen, a career Foreign Service Officer.

Q: Did you ever run across him?

BARNHART: Yes, the Ambassador and his wife always included a few junior officers in the various representational activities. It was a friendly embassy.

Q: You were there until '64?

BARNHART: Right.

Q: Where did you go after that?

BARNHART: They wanted me to extend there, but I wanted to go to the Middle East. I think those were the days before you made choices, but I let someone know, like Barbara Watson or something.

Q: Well, they used to have a thing called the April Fools List on which you would list where you wanted to go, and whether anyone accepted it or not...

BARNHART: The I had worked for in the Director General's office had been in different Middle East posts and Africa. But in those days female offices were rarely sent to the Middle East. They said, "No, we're assigning you to Hong Kong." Hong Kong? Well, okay. The inspectors were there then. This was still in the fall of '64. "Oh, you're so lucky. You're going to love it. It's a wonderful post." Before they left, the assignment changed to Kobe-Osaka, Japan. Following home leave, so I was assigned to Japanese area study. I was on home leave when we got word that I was assigned to Tokyo instead. I went to Tokyo. I got there in March of '65 and stayed till March/April of '68. It was a three-year assignment then.

Q: What were you doing there?

BARNHART: I started out in the Visa Office for a year. I spent a few months in the Passports- in the Passports/Citizenship. It was pretty routine work. Because there were a lot of military in Japan, stacks of passports would come in since they wanted to travel outside of Japan. Anyway, there was just an awful lot of routine work on that section. So I then got down to the Welfare Whereabouts section and worked as a deputy there. There were just two officers, and then when the head left - Lou Gallo, I think - I replaced him as head of Welfare and Whereabouts, and I loved that. Lots of interesting things there, plane crashes. On a Friday night we had word that a CPAL had crashed at the local airport, and that there were six, seven, or eight Americans aboard. The head of the office was visiting, so I had this disaster. Japan being a place where you do not bury, there is no such thing as embalming. Cremation is the only thing. At Tachikawa we had an Air Force base with a mortuary, and so they agreed to take the six or seven Americans and take care of embalming, and preparation for shipping the remains to the U.S. The very next morning I was called. There was another plane crash. The first was a CPAL, this one was a BOAC that flew into Mount Fuji. 89 Americans aboard, all from Minnesota's Dairy Queens. Despite rules to the contrary, I suggested we call Washington, since most were constituents of the Vice President, Hubert Humphrey. In those days you sent Western Union messages on death cases. But that was a very bad crash.

Q: Oh, yes.

BARNHART: Two of them, one within 12 hours really. And the instructions from Paris didn't apply really. That's where we had group of transvestites, an entertaining group. There's when we found the clothing and identification of Mary Jones, and we found the passport was John Jones. There were all kinds of interesting things in Tokyo, too.

Q: Did you have to deal with the police at all there?

BARNHART: Yes, we dealt with the police, and it worked very well. I inherited a police group from my predecessor who left, and so I held weekly English conversation classes tat my residence. I had policemen come in, and they would say, "Oh, you bad people. Look what you did to Hiroshima and this family," and I said, "Oh, you bad people. Look what you did to Pearl Harbor." "Oh, we didn't do that. Those are bad people we had." What can you say? "This was done by our bad people, but you, the United States, are to blame."

There was a lot of military there. And most of our prisoners would be in military jails. I used to visit them frequently. I used to lace fruitcake at Christmas time with rum, because I could get that past the prison officials. I had all kinds of interesting prisoners there, and a lot of deaths and just a little bit of everything.

Q: Were there any particularly bad cases of people arrested?

BARNHART: There was one man who was on the - Ringwald, I think - he was on the FBI 10 Most Wanted List as a forger, and he was caught forging checks in Japan. Eventually he went to jail. He insisted he didn't want an attorney. He wanted to conduct his own defense. Fascinating. "I didn't hurt anyone," he said. He called in the bank teller, the owner of the bank, all kinds of people. I think the checkbook was also a forgery. He wasn't hurting anyone, and he said the insurance company paid the bank, so no one lost any money. It's not a crime. They didn't buy that. So I used to visit him, and I said, "You know, when you get out of here, you go back to the States with this charge." He said, "Don't you worry about me." He had five passports. But he said, "Not to worry. I can get out." I'm sure he had six or seven more passports.

There was one, however, a murderer who moved back and forth between military and civilian jails. My predecessor taught the Japanese jail how to make hamburgers for our American men, and they did, but by the time I took over, they said, "We can't do this any longer. It's too expensive." They were using ground beef, period. And I said, "Well, you know, bread crumbs, put some things in it." "Oh." Fun things to do.

The one death that I remember - the first one I went to was in a hotel in Tokyo. It was late at night when they called. When I arrived at the hotel, the Japanese police were there. I said, "Well, I have to take this and this and this." "All right, fine." The Japanese never gave me any trouble for being a female, really. But then they started to do an autopsy on the spot, and I said, "I'll wait outside." He was a visiting businessman.

In Tokyo I took judo lessons, I took Chinese cooking lessons, I gave English language classes. There was so much going on all the time. It was a very active post.

Q: Who was the Consul General then?

BARNHART: Tom Murfin.

Q: How did he run things?

BARNHART: Just fine. He left you on your own pretty much. He was very, very friendly and very low key. Barbara Watson, Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs, came through on one of her first visits. I had decided I wanted to stay in Tokyo for another two years. She said she'd support a request for an extension of at least another year. The Department came back and said, "Absolutely not. We already have her assigned, and the NEA Bureau will not release her." And I thought, all my efforts to get into NEA. That's the wonderful vagaries of the Department of State. So I went from Tokyo to Jerusalem, which is another interesting place.

Q: You were in Jerusalem when to when?

BARNHART: '68 to '70. I arrived on the day that Sirhan Sirhan shot Bobby Kennedy. From the airport I went right to the consular section to look through the files for his family.

Q: He was a Palestinian?

BARNHART: Yes, he lived up on the West Bank. This was a good way to remember the date of my arrival. I had heard that he had been shot when we were Rome. By the time we got to Athens, the pilot had heard that he died. President Kennedy had died while I was in Paris. A big memorial service was held at Notre Dame. I joined my Embassy colleagues in attendance at the service.

Q: I was interviewing Dan Phillips two days ago, and he was there at the same time and was talking about the emotions and all that were there.

BARNHART: Time wise, this was at night when we got word.

Q: He was saying it was around 11 o'clock or something like that.

BARNHART: Yes, Dan and Rosemary - I haven't seen them in years. We went on a trip together down to the Loire Valley with my friend Annabelle and the Phillips. She mentions them every once in awhile, but I haven't seen them. Well, he's retired now, I guess.

Q: He has another job.

BARNHART: Back to Paris days, briefly. Several of us assigned to Paris signed up to go by ship. There were two ships leaving: one left the third and one the fifth of July, something like that. The SS America took seven days, and the SS United States took five. Those were the days when they sent us first class. The entire first class was filled with Foreign Service - almost 100 percent. There were just a few odd people, and we had really lots of fun.

Back to Tokyo...

Q: Back to Jerusalem, actually.

BARNHART: Jerusalem was fun. I went there, as I say, in June of '68 to '70, and that was interesting. I was in charge of the consular section, and I had one assistant who was there along with about 8 foreign nationals. The Mandlebaum Gate had come down the year before.

Q: We're talking about '67 war when the West Bank in Jerusalem hacome under Israeli rule.

BARNHART: When I got there one year later in '68, I said, "Where's Mandlebaum Gate? Well, right outside of my office, the old consulate that was on the west side, the Arab side, was there. The Deputy Consul General lived upstairs, and we had the consular section downstairs. And then over on the east side, the Israeli side, the Consul General lived upstairs in the building, and the rest of the consulate, admin, political who'd come, were all over there. There was a lot of back and forth. On my side I had the Iraqi Jew, I had a Sabra, being a native born Israeli, and I had a Moroccan. I had the Moroccan but then I had Muslims. I had a whole variety of Christian-Muslims, Muslim Muslims that would get down on a rug five times a day to pray. And he shared an office with this Sabra, but they got along. We just had this mixed bag. Shortly after I had gotten there, there was a big bang. Oh, what's happened? And I went out right away. One of my locals there said, "Oh, that was an explosion." And it had blown in the window in the office where my deputy was sitting, had blown in that window, and he had been just out in the garden. I went out right away and looked around. The detonator had gone off but the bomb hadn't, and I almost stepped on the thing. So that was a little excitement that day.

Q: What was the bomb for?

BARNHART: With the Palestinians these things were going on all the time. The Palestinians and the Israelis would put bombs in wastebaskets. One side would do it and bomb something in Tel Aviv. Then they would retaliate. They would go back to the West Bank, the Israelis, and blow down a building. They found one kid that was involved in this, or they thought was involved. They would go out and take the whole family, give them 24 hours or even eight hours to get out, and then blow it up. It was pretty dicey. I lived on the West Bank, and I had a choice where I wanted to live. Most of us did live on the West Bank. We could get better and larger housing than on the East Bank. We were separate from the Embassy. I mean, we were the Consulate General reporting directly to Washington. It was this corpus separatum, I guess, thing that we didn't recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, or Jerusalem as being part of Israel.

Q: Who was the Consul General when you were there?

BARNHART: Steve Campbell, his wife was French. I never met her. She died before I got there. She had done lots of work in the Resistance and was decorated by the French Government, but unfortunately she died of cancer. I knew some people at, the UN offices in Jerusalem. One of the girls had a house at Gaza. We used to go down there on the weekends. You were certainly limited in where you could go. You could go up to Galilee or Lake Tibberedge. You could roam around the West Bank. But we couldn't cross the Allenby Bridge.

Q: Oh, Allenby Bridge brought you into Jordan?

BARNHART: Into Jordan.

Q: Was everyone there monitoring the temper of the Palestinians ithe West Bank and how this was working out?

BARNHART: Not everyone but political officers both in Jerusalem and from the Embassy in Tel Aviv monitored the situation. When I arrived from Tokyo, I knew far more about the Vietnamese War and what was going on. I remember seeing a headline that Nasser died, but I knew nothing. I hadn't been there more than two or three months, and I pretty much became pro-Arab, as did almost everyone there. They gave us a hard time, they set up roadblocks - the Israelis.

Q: Did you have any Palestinians coming to the Consulate and askinfor help and that sort of thing, and particularly American Palestinians?

BARNHART: Some yes, but not too many. There were other Americans that lived there, religious group type people and so forth, but basically the Americans did not create much of a problem for us. Occasionally there were. There was one famous American, Joe someone, but he was mayor of some little West Bank town and his only problem was: when are you all coming to eat, Saturday, Sunday? And I would turn to my deputy, "You go." I just didn't care much. I'd go when I had to, to some of these. The Arabs wanted to entertain all the time. The Arabs were wonderful when they wanted visas. I did visa work for awhile. They would come in and say, "I have a wife and five to ten kids here, and here's a piece of paper that I own land here, etc., and I want to go just see my brother. I'm coming back, of course. I have all these reasons to come back." And then I found they were walking across to the local gasoline station and borrowing money to come in and show it to me in cash. "We can't show you bank accounts, because our bank is in Jordan." A lot of them would come in too and say, "I'm going to be a student." "Where are you going?" "I'm going to aviation school." And then I said, "And then you're going to work for El-Al?" Air Jordan I didn't think. I had checked on that through our embassy, and they got their pilots from their air force. All kinds of stories. I used to get free food here at the Calvert Inn, though, because of all those nice young Palestinians who couldn't handle US schools and who thus chose employment, i.e. Calvert Inn owned by a West Bank family. I tried to give a limited number to the Arabs. If you had 30 student applications in one day and none of them were any good, you'd have to give a few, because you're also giving visas to the Israelis. But they'd end up in a restaurant or someplace, and say, "You were right. I wasn't a very good student." Anyway they were fun.

The big thing, I guess, that I remember out of Jerusalem - well, there were a number of things that were fun - but I was there when Bishop Pike and his wife came. I didn't know much about them. They were just traveling around. I don't think they were on any official business. He was lost in the desert, and Diane, his wife, called at seven o'clock in the morning, "Come up to the Intercontinental Hotel. I need you." I spent a lot of time with her. She wrote a book called The Search. It was a nice book. But she told me so much about Bishop Pike and his feeling. They had gone down for a drive in the desert, and the car broke down. He was much older than she was, and so she decided she'd climb up the hill to a road. "I'll go for help, and you stay where you are," except then he started to wander around and got confused. Then the police couldn't find him anyplace. We had helicopters, we had at least three seers, one in London, one in Philadelphia and one somewhere else that were called in- you know, those people that can tell you where to look. She trusted that sort of thing.

Q: Well, he was kind of into mysticism.

BARNHART: Yes. One of the things I always remembered: he did not believe in the Holy Trinity, because you don't need it, it's hard to explain. God: the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. Now try and tell a little kid what the Holy Ghost is. Why don't you just say, "We believe in God, period, end." He simplified some things, but he had other thoughts. I used to hold press conferences in the Intercontinental Hotel, where a large number of reporters waited for reports on the searches. About the fifth or sixth day, they (the Israelis) were just ready to give up when they found him.

Q: Was he far away?

BARNHART: He wasn't too far away. He was in a little grotto where there was a little pool of water. But the reporters said, "Well, how can you get lost in a desert?" Now they're thinking of the Sahara or someplace. I wouldn't have called this a desert. It was down near the Dead Sea. But there all kinds of ravines and things. And he had just wandered around.

Q: What was his wife like?

BARNHART: She was a pretty dynamic woman. She was much younger, and big, large woman, attractive but big. She was able to climb up a mountain and get help, very strong, and she believed in all this. I think she had been a student of his, and they married. And when she went back to California, she started an organization called Love something. She'd keep in constant contact. She called me once and asked me if I could help a friend whose daughter needed an abortion, and was it legal in Israel? And I said, "I'll check." It could be done, but it was not legal. I said, "I can't get involved in this. I'm not going to take responsibility." She was a 13-year-old, or 14. "Well," she said, "the mother has finally decided that she'd go and have it done where she had the one done before." Oh. I used to get these calls in the middle of the night from Diane.

Q: Absolutely. Well, that was a very famous case.

BARNHART: Yes, and I think I still have the book. I haven't read it for a long time. She was very, very nice to me. Several weeks after my arrival an old grand dame, Mrs. Vester, (American) died.

Q: This is the American colony.

BARNHART: American colony, yes. I stayed there for the first two weeks after my arrival. I knew Freda and the family well. She died within a week. So, I got the consulate van to haul the remains and help take care of Mrs. Vester's funeral. Since then the family members remain my best friends.

Q: Well, they have a very interesting history. I did some research on it one time, and you should read their early reports of the consul there. They were just absolutely detested there. Claimed that there was forced sex by the elders, and it was a very, very odd group that first came there. And she was the daughter of the couple that started this sect, so she was obviously there with her parents. I don't know it's true, but the consular history is an interesting one.

BARNHART: It would be interesting. Mrs. Vester wrote a book, or someone else did. I remember reading it. It was her life after settling in Jerusalem. She knew Lawrence of Arabia. Her kids were born, then World War I came, and so one of them, who's still there running an area in the old walled city, Anna Grace Vester - an American citizen, as was her mother- and doing great work. Other children were not. They were either German or English. Mrs. Vester had her children in various places, and some could claim citizenship because of her, but some didn't.

Q: Did you ever have any dealings with the mayor of the Israeli parof Jerusalem, Teddy Kolleck?

BARNHART: Yes, I had met him several times on business or at receptions. There were seven countries that didn't recognize Jerusalem, namely the Dutch, the French, the Spanish, the Greeks, and the United States, but all had small consulates in JerusaleThe diplomatic community was small as well. You could go to five receptions in the same week and see them every time. Teddy Kolleck handled official business. He was nice. I was reading about the one who's there now, who is not so nice.

Q: Not so nice, no. He's sort of a true believer, I guess.

BARNHART: You couldn't drive everywhere when you wanted. The Maesherain area of the Orthodox Jews was right outside of my office. You don't drive on a Saturday morning, because they'll stone your car. I used to play golf down in Caesarea on the Israeli coast, and at least once, I had to spend the weekend because I could not get on the highway because it was one of the high holy days. Orthodox Jews used to come in the office for visas. "We have to go to the United States for the high holy days," and I had thought all Jews came to Jerusalem for the high holy days. I learned that for many, their head rabbi was in the U.S. The Orthodox Jews, they'd sit there and they's look down, and when I'd ask them a question, they continued to look down. They'd never look at you. So then when it came time, if the locals put the passport in, then I signed it. I'd sit there and just hold it to see if they would reach for it - because they won't touch a nonbeliever or have any contact. If they really wanted it and wanted to get out of the office, they'd finally grab it.

Q: Somebody who was dealing with them said that when you've got whole roomful, it really smells, because they didn't bathe.

BARNHART: No, and they wore those heavy coats and fur hats. While I was there, the Israelis hired a pathologist to work at the Hebrew University. He lived in Jerusalem in the Orthodox area. Because the Orthodox don't believe in pathology, they went and dragged his mother and his wife out of the apartment and did considerable damage. They didn't kill them, but they tore apart the apartment. That was one of the first things I remember seeing. There wasn't anything we could do about it. They are violent, and they were even in those days. If I had been the man, I would have packed up and gone home, but I guess he was going to stay around. He was Jewish.

Q: Did you have any contact with our embassy in Tel Aviv?

BARNHART: Yes, we'd go down there occasionally. They had a little commissary down there, and we would take turns running once a week for shopping. I joined the Caesarea golf course outside of Tel Aviv. Walmuth Firebrecht was Ambassador, and he used to play golf as well. But I got such a kick out of it. One day I was playing golf down there in Caesarea, I was playing with some UN people, and this couple was ahead of us in the woods. They said, "We're going to play through them." And I couldn't see until we got up there. "Oh, it's the political counselor." Well, it was Owen Zurhellen. We became very good friends. He would use me as sort of a hostess, when he had to entertain in Jerusalem.

Q: Dealing with our Embassy in Tel Aviv, was it sort of us and thebetween Jerusalem and...?

BARNHART: Yes, pretty much so. Our Consulate Generals for the most part were pro-Arab, I would say. Consular people move around and like that, but still there was not too much support for the Israelis, whereas Tel Aviv was just the opposite. I don't know whether they had an Arabist there or not. I don't think so. They would read our reports. Anytime Jerusalem sent cables into Washington, we'd info Tel Aviv. But there wasn't any love lost, or very little.

Q: Were you doing any looking for...

BARNHART: Counting halftracks? Well, when I was living on the West Bank, we always - I think they were called halftracks, these big convoy things - and you always reported those. You counted them if you happened to be around to see one. Yes, we did report a lot of them, all of us were told to. It was a small consulate there, and so we all watched what went on.

Q: In 1970 where'd you go?

BARNHART: IN 1970 I came back to Washington to be in SCS to replace someone by the name of Kay Ramsey, Civil Service, to handle federal benefits. My office served as liaison with those federal agencies we represented overseas-Social Security, VZ, Railroad retirees, etc. Oh, I hated that work when I was overseas. But I ran into someone I had known who was an EA - I think it was Don McCue. He told me there was a sudden opening in EA Personnel. They wanted me to take it, and I said fine. Barbara Watson said no. She even invited me over to her home one day. It was Kentucky Derby day, I remember, one Saturday, and she gave me a big spiel about how I had to stay in SCS because she was not going to release me.

Q: SCS means Special Consular Services.

BARNHART: Bob Gordon was fighting for me to go the other way. She won. As it turned out, it was one of those things I wouldn't have chosen, but it was a good job. I could wheel and deal the way I wanted. For example, I told Social Security that we were not going to do their mailing anymore of all these forms telling consular officers to do this immediately. I said, "You send them by surface mail, and then you say they don't answer right away." It got to the point where Treasury checks were sent from Washington to all but a very few posts. Anyway, there was a lot of work, and it was fun. I had meetings with people from SSA and Veterans, and Barbara Watson was very supportive.

Q: You were there from '70 to '72?

BARNHART: Well, '70 to '72 in SCS, then the Department '70 to '74, and then I moved into Personnel '72 to '74, and I was counseling mid-career consular officers there in Personnel with Will Chase, and we did the mid-levels, three to five, I think.

Q: I had that job at one time, a little before Laurie Lawrence.

BARNHART: Yes, Laurie Lawrence was one who said, "You won't want to be in Personnel." I said, "Yes, I do." This was later. I enjoyed that job too.

Q: I did this, your job, from around '67 to '69, I think, and we were going through sort of a trial period where we were trying to maintain a certain standard for the counselor officers. This was with the support of Barbara Watson. We were beginning to say no to couriers who didn't want to travel all the time and secretaries who really weren't very popular with their bosses so they tried to get them out, essentially a lot of discards. How was this happening with you at that time?

BARNHART: Well, I didn't have any trouble with that, personally.

Q: My interest in that was: We were trying to stop a lot of people coming in who really weren't very - they were discards essentially from other places rather than people who really wanted to get in and had potential.

BARNHART: I think that was the period when I was asked to convert from FSO to FSSO. I don't remember why or how, but it was recommended so I did. And that may have been in '68-'69. So I guess I did get caught in that, but I got a promotion almost immediately, and the next thing I knew, I had to convert back to FSO. I didn't pay much attention to any of it. I noticed it when I was in Personnel Counseling. I had to deal with Geographic Bureaus to get good assignments for Consular Officers. You remember that set-up. You had the Geographic Bureau and the Cone. And I'd say, "I do not want another little old lady in Hong Kong. That was a good place to put them, and EA didn't like them either. But it was the big posts that got stuck with a lot of these.

Q: And also the border posts, Canadian ones particularly. These arpeople whose mothers weren't well or they really didn't want to travel.

BARNHART: I had one person in Personnel with all the political officers that wanted to re-cone to consulate, and I got furious with them. I was there also when spouses were coming back in the Foreign Service saying, "I left when I was an O7 to get married, and I had to quit, and now I want to come back" - and so they opened that up - "and I want to come in at about five level or four or whatever." And then we, of course, had minority hire. That was later, but back in '72 to '74 there were a lot of personnel problems, it seemed to me. When I was involved in the consular once, the political officers wanted to come in, because they were not getting promoted, they didn't have supervisory skills. You can get that in the consular affairs for one tour. We'd re-cone a couple.

Q: Well, did you have the feeling...?

BARNHART: I never had any feeling of inferiority.

Q: It looks like things had been tipped and changed, maybe becausof Barbara Watson taking a fairly firm stand on the Consular Corps.

BARNHART: Yes, she did, and she was very good for the Consular Corps. She was succeeded briefly by a political appointee and later reappointed to the same position-running the consular operations..

Q: Sir Wallen Tinnowitz.

BARNHART: I got along with Barbara very well and admired her highly. I think that the ones that had trouble - and I knew a lot of them - never moved out of the consular group. "Representation, we don't do any of that. That's not part of the job. It's a nine to five job, or eight to five, whatever, and, yes, we have duty every so often." They were awfully hard to deal with sometimes. Some of them were very good.

Q: I know when I was dealing with basically the same cadre you were, there were some people who were very limited. They might have come in bright and fresh and all, but by the time they reached that mid-career thing, they really had no aspirations - a small cadre. I mean, there were others who really wanted to get out, but they just did their consular thing and that was it.

BARNHART: I have a friend - retired now - and they used to get after her. She absolutely refused supervisory jobs. It got to the point where she had gotten a promotion - I forget what for - and the jobs that were available involved some supervision. and she said, "No, I want a five job or a six job." She was just one of a number like that. Yes, there was that trouble. Of course, when I look at the trouble nowadays - married couples, handicapped, health problems, minorities, etc. I would say the groups that are in the most trouble are the single people, male or female. They're discriminated against. And, of course, we have handicapped now. I worked on that a little.

Q: Were you working on handicapped at this time?

BARNHART: No.

Q: You were in Bangkok from when to when?

BARNHART: August of '74 to March of '76.

Q: What was your job in Bangkok?

BARNHART: I was head of the consular section.

Q: How big was the consular section?

BARNHART: It was quite large. I'm trying to remember. There were four officers and quite a large staff. Actually, the position had been Consul General, and Wendell Jorgensen, I think, was my predecessor. Because of my grade then, we downgraded it to some extent. I was on the country team.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

BARNHART: It was William Kintner. He was, retired military, and wrote at least one book, if not more, on arms control. He was a specialist in nuclear medicine, arms control, and that sort of thing. He could be a nice person, but he would have receptions and go to sleep in the corner. One time - I think it was a Marine ball, one of the first I went to - he just staggered. It was clearly obvious what was wrong with him. Charles Whitehouse replaced him while I was still there. When I got there they had just moved the consular section from the Embassy grounds to the USIS grounds.

Q: What was the reason for moving?

BARNHART: The Ambassador did not like the visa applicants and all the general public coming through his front lobby. I think at one point they had a side entrance, but then they'd still be waiting outside, and he didn't like that. So he had the admin officer find a new location, which was interesting because it was an old warehouse. They refurbished it with green carpeting, drapes, etc. I remember it had a second floor, and I thought, well, maybe I'll just make an apartment up on the second floor. It would be convenient. No, because that was unsafe. The floor, they said, was not stable enough to support an apartment, refrigerator, whatever. A little aside on that particular issue was in 1984 I went back to Bangkok as a refugee officer on a six-week TDY, and I worked with the voluntary agency group, all of them, on the second floor of that building. There was a huge number of files on that floor. It was just a coincidence. I was there actually when the refugee operation moved to another building, and so I moved once into that building and ten years later out of it.

Q: What were sort of the challenges of consular work in Thailand i'74 to '76?

BARNHART: Actually, it was not easy. There were a lot of students, but all of our students were screened by USIS language program, which meant that not only did they come in with the proper documents for a student visa but they had an okay from USIS. So that was fairly easy. We had a lot of American military, and so we had a lot of couriers with passport applications. Actually the military, I believe, were allowed in the country. I think they were allowed in the country without a passport, although status of forces didn't quite apply at the time you let them in, but if they wanted to go anyplace, they had to get a passport. I don't know why they weren't encouraged to get a passport before they came, but we had a lot of passport work. Immigrant visa work - the very interesting part was that during the time I was in Bangkok, particularly the first year, non-preference visa numbers were available to anyone who could prove that they had sufficient money, sufficient financial resources that he/she would open their own business and hire Americans. Because Southeast Asia in general was a little shaky, it was amazing the number of very, very high, prominent Thais that would come in, usually referred by the Ambassador, and I would help process their immigrant visas. One example was Johnny Sue.

Q: Who was he?

BARNHART: Well, he and his wife owned Johnny's Gems, a big jewelry business that serviced all the military catalogs and the military bases. So he was going to set up shop, I think, in Hawaii, and he had no problem whatsoever with the visa. A very good Thai friend of mine, then came to the United States and wanted an immigrant visa. He was going to go and live in New York as a retiree. Because of the Vietnam war, they were worried. Anything could happen any day in Thailand. My landlords came in. It was kind of a status symbol to have an immigrant visa, and there was no problem giving them visas. I forget the minimum amount you had to have, but these Thais had more than enough. The wife whose husband owned Singh beer had a penthouse in Watergate, and she thought it would be nice to have a green card to come and go. Immigrant visa work was good for me in a way because it brought me into a lot of contact with the Thais, some of which whom I have kept up with to this day.

Q: What was your impression of the situation in Thailand during th'74 to '76 period?

BARNHART: In general, I think, it was quite good. Thailand was doing very well. There was a lot of American military, not right in Bangkok but in outlying. There was a military mission in Bangkok. Basically the economy was doing well. Traffic was bad, but nothing compared to what it was ten years later. It was really a great time for the first year. Actually it stayed that way for the whole time I was there vis-a-vis Thailand, but in April of '75, Indochina fell. We had the Laos coming in along with the Cambodians and some Vietnamese refugees. That was where the Vietnamese military - South Vietnamese - brought this whole fleet of American planes in right after Saigon fell. They had intended to leave. They were just bringing the equipment, and they wanted to go home, because their wives, families were in Vietnam. We did expeditiously send them on to Guam for processing. Didn't think anyone would want to go, but their lives would be in danger. But a lot of them did filter back in, I understand. We built refugee camps, and I had a role in handling the refugees situation along with the administration office. And then the chargï¿½ decided that wasn't working too well, and so I was in charge of it for a little while. It was just too much. I didn't have the cooperation of the staff. But it was interesting.

Q: You say you didn't have the cooperation of the staff.

BARNHART: Well, my own consular officers absolutely didn't want to work overtime. For the amount of work during that brief period, it was like 12 hours a day. It was interesting. I got to fly around in helicopters and little F4s to and from the Embassy and the refugee camps. But, you know, one had a family, another one - you know, it was a nine to five job, period, end. And I guess I pushed them, but it didn't do any good, other than the fact they were unhappy.

Q: I was just wondering, with our embassies having collapsed in Indochina, I would have thought there would have been some spare officers floating around who could have been brought to help you.

BARNHART: Not really. When Laos fell, I think we kept an officthere, as I recall.

Q: We did.

BARNHART: They had evacuated the great majority of people. They kept the consular officer because the consular officer was part of a husband-wife team - Steve Johnson and Judy Rose, I think. So Steve took over. Judy was the economic. I guess there was an economic and a political. So there was someone there. In Phnom Penh the Ambassador came out there on a plane. He brought a number of refugees with him and the admin officer and a few others, and he set up office in the embassy in Bangkok and had his name up there as the Ambassador. By then Kintner had gone, and his replacement wasn't there, so we had a chargï¿½. It was a little difficult for the chargï¿½, but he did put a stop to the fact that when the Ambassador to Cambodia started sending cables to Washington and signing them.

Q: This was John Gunther Dean, who was a very powerful figure -person, more a personality.

BARNHART: He brought his administrative officer, Art Goodwin, and Art had been down earlier. He had adopted a Cambodian child, and we worked on the paperwork in advance, knowing that something was going to happen. Anyway, I remember, we processed the visa, the orphan visa, but we went through all the paperwork. I mean, he did a lot of it, and the child came out and stayed with someone else at the embassy, and went to the United States to assist her. He himself was evacuated, brought out another child and said, "I want to send this child to the United States. I want you to issue an immigrant visa as an orphan to be adopted." We didn't have any paperwork. To this day he gets annoyed. There was no way to document this kid as an orphan, or any of the paperwork. There was nothing there. There was a group of orphans sponsored by World Vision, so we arranged for this child to go with that group to the States. There were big signs hanging on him, "This is the property of - I forget Art's sister's name - and don't touch him." Anyway, they gave even this child a hard time. For a day or two the sister had trouble getting hold of the kid, and Art blamed me for the whole thing.

Graham Martin came in. He was floating around. I was told to go get his passport. He was not going back to the States. They wanted him back in the States, and I said, "No way." I wasn't about to take away his passport. He was going on to France, very quite, low key.

Q: He was our Ambassador to Vietnam and had just been evacuated.

BARNHART: Yes, and the Midway came into Bangkok. Many of the evacuees our of Vietnam office, of our people, went on to Hong Kong or the Philippines, but the Midway came in to Utapao in Thailand.

Q: This is a big aircraft carrier.

BARNHART: Yes, and these people, including my friend Pat Wayhugh, were on it. There were several consular officers. They were going to be moved back to the States right away. There were some reporters, quite a group of them, and AID people. We dealt with them for about a week. They came out with nothing. It was very sad.

Q: Did the Thais go into any kind of panic? Did you notice anchange when Vietnam went down the tubes?

BARNHART: Not really. It was more with the visas. I think by then, as I recall, the non-preference, I mean the green card, wasn't as easily accessible as it had been. But the Thais had been worried all along that if Indochina fell, they might be in trouble, but they weren't in trouble. In fact, I suspect that financially they may have profited. Since Utapao was a big base that brought into Thailand, to Bangkok, considerable financial resources. Because a lot of refugees came out, a lot of money came in. I remember handling a group of five or six women. They were Vietnamese Cabinet officers' wives, and I move them on to Utapao very quickly. It was interesting. You could help people. Lon Noll came in my office, he and his whole family of 40 people, a sweet little man.

Q: He was the Prime Minister of Cambodia.

BARNHART: Cambodia, yes.

Q: Of course, at this time, the great genocide in Cambodia was jusgetting started.

BARNHART: That really came later with the Pol Pot regime. I saw more of that when I was dealing with refugee matters. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything. It was busy, always. Also, by then, when Indochina fell, our U.S. military bases started to close. We had a lot of passport/visa work with Thai wives and the military. I was asked if I would go around to all the military bases, up to the north and east, to discuss consular matters. I said, "Sure," and they provided a plane. It was a great way to travel. The commercial officer said, "Can I go with you?" He wouldn't mind seeing some of it. I said, "Fine." We had a wonderful time. I loved it. It was the best way to fly. You had someone meeting you right out there when the plane landed, a little six-passenger or eight-passenger, little jet, but it was fun. There were a lot of things like that really.

Q: When you were dealing with the refugees, did you get involved with the non- governmental organizations, the NGOs, who deal with refugees?

BARNHART: Oh, yes.

Q: This is fairly early on in this great flood. How did that work?

BARNHART: No, they weren't involved in them then, or at least they hadn't even set up business at that point. We were shipping most of these refugees without any screening. Anyone who had gotten out of Laos, Vietnam, or Cambodia, was allowed to stay in Thailand briefly, but they were to go. We sent a lot to Guam and some to Camp Pendleton in California, where they were processed there - that may be where you would find the voluntary agencies starting to get involved. But this was right in the beginning. When you asked whether I worked with them, I did but that was 10 years later.

But it was interesting, and I really liked the Thais very much, and they're the only group, not that many but three or four of the families - and remember this goes back 20 years, more than 20 years-that I keep in touch with. Now, I've never done that at any of the other posts, even more recent posts. But they're just friendly people, and, as I say, I met a lot of the president of the bank and some of the royal family, the second and third degree. It was kind of a fun thing. I got into the Royal Sports Club, a nice little golf course right in the heart of Bangkok, which is nice, and some interesting people too. Socially it was a fun for a consular officer. I was on all the diplomatic lists, as head of the consular section, and over at the embassy there would be the Ambassador and the DCM. Usually one or the other of them went, and I would go, but they didn't get down to the political counselor. We had a lot of, many more, senior people, but for me it was fun.

Q: Wasn't Bangkok - I'm not sure if it was at that point, but it certainly became so shortly thereafter - sort of the sex capital almost through the world, which means tourists coming in including Americans, and all the problems that occur when you throw sex and drugs in a foreign country. What about the protection of welfare?

BARNHART: We did considerable work in this area. We also had four, five, six people in jail, usually on drug charges, and we'd visit them fairly regularly. I had one officer particularly who did the Welfare Whereabouts and visited jails. She was beloved, because she would carry in cartons of cigarettes for them. I went out once and carried a few packs. "Well, you're not as good as Mrs. Fisher." There was one that was funny, a young man, no money. He was brought out. He was found on the border. He had been in Vietnam, and some journalist thought, well, we'll help this poor American citizen who has no money, no nothing. And they got him into Bangkok and brought him in to me. I took one look at him, and he looked at me and said, "I know you." He had been a welfare case when I was in Jerusalem, and he was still just going around the world. His father said, "I'll send the money if he goes to Israel, cuts his hair, and gets rid of his guitar,." That's what he had to do, and then Papa would send a ticket, nontransferable and one-way from Bangkok to Israel. Well, he finagled his way around that. It was interesting. But we didn't really have too much trouble. On the sex thing, everyone went down to the Pat Bong area - I mean tourists did - but they didn't seem to get into trouble. I used to take visitors down there at lunchtime, IRS, anyone that came to town. It was a fun place.

Q: I was there at a consular conference and went out with a bunch oother consular officers, and we spent an evening.

BARNHART: This is the thing. When were you there?

Q: This was about '77 or '78.

BARNHART: When I was there, Ralph Nader was there, and he knew the area very well. So when we had anyone around for lunch, the two of us would take them down to Pat Bong, to a couple of favorite places, and let these little dancing girls with nothing on sit on their laps. I think one night I took John Vessey in at nighttime, and poor, young John. I have to backtrack. Did I have help? Yes, from other Thai posts, Barbara Bodine. Well, Barbara Bodine was already in Bangkok, but John Vessey came down, loved to come down, and he did a lot of help. It was tiring, and I think I came down with sprue out of that whole assignment. One little episode out of that - I don't know whether I should mention it, but people remember it. I drove into the kwang one night.

Q: You might explain what a kwang is.

BARNHART: Well, it's a canal. They covered up most of them, but they were water passages. If you know anything about canals in Venice, for example, it was the same sort of thing, but they called them kwangs. They were on the side of each road. I had left a party at our head courier's office one night, and there was an Australian Qantas representative behind me. He said, "You please lead me out, because I don't know my way." It was night by then, 12, one o'clock, and we all had a few drinks. So I drive out this little side street, and somehow I got confused and I thought, well, the street is wider than I remember it. You could see a white fence over there, so I just pulled way over, and then I thought, well, there's a lot of water. But in Bangkok, in the city too and outside, potholes a foot deep were perfectly normal, and I thought it was a big pothole. I could see the headlights of the car behind me had stopped, and I thought, why. I don't know how long it took - not long, because suddenly the car wouldn't go further and I could look out and see water, and I remember thinking of Chappaquiddick and I thought this is stupid. I kicked off my shoes - you don't swim with shoes on - left my little evening purse there, took the keys out of the car, and tried to open the door. I couldn't get the door open, and so I started to roll down the window. About the time I did that, which is the way I got out actually, the poor Australian had jumped in this water, which is filthy dirty - it's used for sewage and everything else, there are snakes in it, who knows - but he jumped out and he tried to open the right-hand door. That was about the time, I guess, the whole thing went down, but I got out, and he helped me, and we went back to our host and hostess and had a brandy, and I think he took me home then. That night I had called my insurance agent, because the USAA representative lived right above me in the same apartment. He said, "At one o'clock in the morning, there's nothing I can do. Call me tomorrow." So I called him the next morning, and then I called the one garage that dealt with foreign cars. It was a very dramatic thing. It was Barbara Bodine actually and John Vessey who came by and they took me out to where this was. People never forgot that. To this day, someone will say, "Oh, she's the one that drove in the kwang." It was an embarrassing situation, but I didn't see any need. But the Ambassador was very nice. He even said I could get permission to bring in a new car. But I got this one fixed. It was just one of the many things. There were lots of experiences in that slightly less than two years in Bangkok.

Q: Well, in '76 were there?

BARNHART: Well, in '76 I asked to be transferred. By then we were back to the chargï¿½ business, "Well, your staff doesn't like you very well." I said, "No, I know they don't," because I tried to push them. I never could put up with this "Well, I have to go home and take care of...."

Q: When you talk about the staff, you're talking about the Americastaff?

BARNHART: My American staff. Oh, no, the Thai staff was very good. But it was basically my American staff was annoyed at being asked to work beyond 4:30 when one had to go to exercise class and another one had to go because he had to spend all of the time and weekends with his family. No, they just didn't want to do anything other than basic work, and they wanted no part of the refugees or anything.

Q: Normally the Foreign Service Officer expects to, in a time oemergency all of a sudden, you know, you do things.

BARNHART: I had never experienced this. Yes, in Jerusalem, in Tokyo, wherever else I had been, you pitch in. But they absolutely were not going to help at all. This was not part of their work. I had never heard a Consular Officer or any other Foreign Service Officer say, "Well, my job description calls for this." In any event, they went to the chargï¿½. He asked me about it, and I explained, yes, that was perfectly right, and particularly since he was the one that had made me run this whole refugee business. I said I had no support. So I talked to Washington, and they came up with Brazil. I had never been in South America. First they came up with Rio, and I said, "I want to go to Sao Paulo instead." Never mind, that had already been assigned to someone. I couldn't be happier that I went to Rio, believe me. I spent four great years.

Q: Oh, then, so you took Portuguese. So when did you arrive?

BARNHART: In Rio, in about August of '76. I came back in March, and I had four or five months of home leave and Portuguese language for that summer.

Q: How did Rio strike you when you got there?

BARNHART: Beautifully and lots of sunshine. I was very lucky. First of all, it was a Consulate General. It had been the embassy, as you know, but it moved to Brasilia. When I took Portuguese, I was in with the new political officer, the new economic officer, the new commercial officer, all three of them and myself as the fourth one, all going to Rio, and David Lyne going up to Recife. He was getting a special class. He had been born in Brazil and had basic Portuguese like the way the nannies spoke and that sort of thing, so he was converting. But anyway, it was great. So the four of us ran each section, and we had gotten along in language, so it was kind of fun when I went there. I knew everyone. There was Gordon Jones of econ; Bill Simmons, political; and Peter Hanson. John Dexter was Consul General, and I was head of the consular section. When I got there, they pointed out several places to live that were vacant, but the one was Melissa Wells' place, because she had been commercial officer for the whole country. Anyway, I got her apartment, which was a two-story penthouse apartment in Jardine Botanico with a swimming pool. It was gorgeous. It was just beautiful. It was inexpensive, because the owner had been part of the You-ark government, I guess, way back and had been exiled to Mexico and had turned this over to the then Embassy, and all he wanted was his money in dollars. So it didn't cost nearly as much as some of the other places, and that's why they decided. I don't know if they've kept it to this day, but they did keep it for a long, long time. It was wonderful living. The job was quite nice. I had the visa section. I sort of had my choice, I guess. What did I take over? I can't remember. I think I did Welfare Whereabouts or passports. But it was a nice group of people, and the locals were wonderful. They had been doing this for years. They were very experienced. And it was reasonably honest. I didn't see anything. The interesting part was that - that would have been '76 - it was the time when the visa office determined if they were going to cut back immigrant visa issuance to just one post per country. At that time when I got there, we issued about the same number as Sao Paulo did. The inspectors had recommended that it be Rio because they thought that Rio could use additional work. Well, Sao Paulo raised all sorts of trouble. They wanted it. Whoever got it would need one more national employee. When I got there, this was being battled, and I remember all the inspectors came in. Robert Sayer came in. He had been head of the inspectors. He had been Inspector General, I think, before he went there. He brought in George High as his DCM. George High had been an inspector, and Terry Leonhardy had been an inspector. Terry was Consul General in Sao Paulo. George High said, "We recommended Rio," and Terry had gone along with that before, but he said, "Well, now that I'm here, I want to do it here." So I remember going down to Sao Paulo with George, telling - he did, not me - Terry Leonhardy that the decision had been made, it was going to be in Rio and they were going to lose immigrant visas. They were not happy with this. I got along very well with both the Ambassador and the DCM, and the DCM let me be one of the supervising consul in the country. So I got to go over to Bahia, Recife. From time to time I could do that, because we were then the biggest consular section with the visa workload.

Q: What was the political situation like?

BARNHART: Well, the political situation was fairly stable then, and that brings me to one other point of making it a slightly easier consular workload. To get permission for Brazilians to leave the country, they had to pay a deposit. It was not cheap. They would have to pay for a deposit to get an exit permit, and they needed an exit permit to leave the country. They had to deposit money in the bank for each traveler, and they would get it back when they returned It was a healthy amount of money, which meant that we didn't have potential immigrants trying to enter with tourist visas.

Q: Why was the Brazilian government doing that?

BARNHART: The Brazilian government did not want the Brazilians spending their money outside of Brazil. They were very nationalistic. Import items as well as American products were banned from entering the country. If they had an exit permit, you knew that they had plenty of money and they had to come back to get it back. The exit permit was taken off the last year before I left. But the presaro (Brazilian currency)was stable while I was there, yet shortly after I left it went down the drain. It's changed so much. Crime wasn't that bad either, although we had people in jail and Americans who died. There were a number of American businesspeople who gave up their citizenship, you couldn't get promoted unless you were a Brazilian citizen. I know one friend of mine was high up with the local English language paper, and he was told he could not be promoted unless he was a Brazilian citizen. He was married to a Brazilian. So, he gave up his American citizenship and became a Brazilian, but we didn't worry too much because he had family in the United States who could file a petition. He was just one of a number of American businessmen who gave up their citizenship because of this.

Q: Did you have problems with young people coming down for thcarnival and staying too long and that sort of thing?

BARNHART: Not particularly. It was expensive. Where we had more trouble was when it came to tourists being robbed. In those days the little thieves were not armed with knives and guns like they are today, but every Monday morning you would get someone coming in, and you'd hear it so often. They'd come in and say, "I don't have any passport or any money." I'd say, "I'll bet you were out on the beach, and you had everything in your flight bag and you walked away for two minutes or someone came up and asked you for a cigarette lighter." It was just so common. These little kids that came down from Niffibellas, Copacabana, Ipanema Beach, would either ask for a light or ask for a cigarette, one or the other. Some of these people actually went in the water and left this stuff. They all carried everything, and they all ended up broke. In fact, one of our Foreign Service officers and his wife landed in that situation too once. But it was just to common - robbery. Homes weren't broken into. This didn't apply to the residents per se, but the tourists just constantly. We had some bad cases. We had a girl I remember - very young - who was down with a drug dealer, and in a fight she fell out of the 21st story of the Hilton Hotel. He says - again, it's possibly true - that she was covered with oil or something like that and was out on the balcony and they had a little argument and she slipped out of his grasp, which is probably true. Her family came down. It was a very tragic thing. We had a number of people dying there - tourists - but not an undue amount. As I say, we had a really bad bus accident, and there were some really bad isolated instances of welfare.

Q: How were the jails for Americans?

BARNHART: They weren't bad. The morgue was the worst place. After a carnival, we'd have to go there and try and identify a missing American. But the jails were just so-so. They really didn't like to keep Americans in jail too much. There was a ring of cocaine. I visited the women's jail a couple of times. Those were the young girls, usually, in Florida or someplace carrying drugs back and forth - Americans - and we had a couple there that were there for quite some time, and they were well taken care of. They were runners. One of them had a six-year-old son back someplace in the States and was worried about him. Now the problem with the need for an exit permit, that did create problems, because our resident Americans there had to have an exit permit from the Brazilian government to leave, and they had to put up the money too, just like the Brazilians. They would be the equivalent, I guess, of immigrants but not citizens. A number of times there would be an emergency in the States - it always happened on the weekend - and they couldn't get out. We would go after the local authority. But they were very strict. They wouldn't do it. They absolutely said, "Wait till Monday." We may have gotten one done. We did have a number of those. There was a big American community there too. It was really a home away from home laid-back society. It was one of those things that Brazil was in better condition price wise than Argentina. So you don't want to go down there, because it's very expensive now. But six months or two years later, go to Argentina. Things are cheaper than in Brazil.

Q: You left there in 1980, and then what?

BARNHART: My assignment in Rio ended. After six years overseas ('74-'80), I asked for a departmental assignment. I said, "I'd like a Department assignment," and my family role. This was after reading a report that had been done on minorities and the lack thereof in the Foreign Service. The study recommendation was the Department of State should hire someone very high, at the Assistant Secretary level, to insure that minorities are better represented. The Department did token service to this. I got the job of being in charge of minority recruitment for the Foreign Service personnel.

Q: How long were you doing that?

BARNHART: Two years, not quite two years, and then I went to thRefugee Bureau.

Q: I would have thought that they would have had a black woman.That would seem to be the thing.

BARNHART: Apparently there wasn't one available.

Q: You were in what?

BARNHART: It was the Bureau of Recruitment and Examination in State office in Rosslyn.

Q: Could you talk about the approach? We talked about 1980. How dyou do this?

BARNHART: Well, basically, ever since I remember, '67, they had a program whereby junior officers, minority junior officers, did not have to take the written exam. They had to take the oral exam. And I had all the list at that point of how many minorities came in and when they came in. It was interesting. But a lot of the minority junior officers came in that way. But by then studies had proven that they really didn't work as well. So we started a program whereby the near-passers would be considered. In other words, if you didn't get 60 but you're between 60 and 70, but if you had 45 on the written, you'd be way down the list to be examined. The other was the mid-level program. It was a mess. I forget when that started. Mid-level was minority - and women, that's what it was. It was mid-level women of any race. I forget when it started, but I remember going over the papers where they said, "We will let this program go until we get a hundred more women in." By the time I got there, we had already gotten a hundred, and I said, "Let's stop with that." The ones that I saw and interviewed - there were some wives - were some good ones, but particularly they put a lot of them in consular work. Yet they were supposed to have previous experience that related to one of the cones. Well, a history teacher, a political scientist, and so forth would relate more to the political field. Rarely would anyone specifically relate to consular work, but the majority of them got put in the consular cone. I could see an attorney, but that was the closest you could come. I remember one - and I think she did fairly well. She had been a student advisor at a big university, so at least she knew visa problems. There were a few good ones that came through that program, as a matter of fact. I just felt that particular program was not necessary anymore by about '81. It had brought in over its hundred, and those that really wanted to came in that way. Okay, but I didn't think it was necessary. And I particularly didn't like the way they were shoving them all into the consulate. They'd come in at mid-level, three, four, five, mostly at five, and they were not happy with junior assignments or assignments underneath them. They all wanted to be supervisors or something.

Q: But they weren't bringing in anything they could supervise?

BARNHART: No, that's right.

Q: Any experience.

BARNHART: That's right. Once in a while there were a few of them that did have some experience of one sort or another. Admin was a place that could take more, but they didn't. What we did do, we ran a recruiting program. We zeroed in on minority groups on campuses and on women's colleges. I went over to Goucher a couple of times and recruited there. I didn't do too much recruiting myself, because I had sent out all these teams of people from other areas to do it, but I opted on Penn State, Pitt, and Goucher. When you went to a regular university, a coed university, you weren't supposed to talk to minority groups. It was an interesting job.

I could pinch-hit on the Board of Examiners when they needed a woman and so forth. Up until the time when a friend called me, Don Shannon of the Los Angeles Times. He had apparently called to get some statistics, and he was referred to me. He was writing a whole big article on Foreign Service and interviewing people, and I don't know what the gist of it was, but he said, "What are you doing?" And I said, "Don, you can't imagine. Here I am sitting. I hate minorities and women, but I'm back running the program." I thought it was funny, and he thought it was funny too. Joan Clark didn't think it was so funny, and what's his name, the other Kennedy who was administration.

Q: Dick Kennedy.

BARNHART: Yes, Dick Kennedy. He didn't think it was so funny. But anyway, I just said it jokingly, and I certainly had not said that I was forced out of Brazil, but he threw that in for local color. "They dragged her back from wonderful Rio de Janeiro to do this, and she doesn't even like women or minorities." The Department wanted me to retract it. That was the first thing they wanted me to do. I was to issue a written retraction of this, and I didn't say any of it. They never asked me, ever once, did I say it. I was home on vacation at one point, and they called me up in Pennsylvania about this. But never did anyone say, "Did you really say that?" I would have said yes, but I sure wasn't going to write a retraction. Basically I told them from my limited experience with the press, it's better to say nothing, this will pass away. It's out on the West Coast. No one's going to pay much attention to it, but if we make a big fuss, they will. So, I couldn't be on the Board of Examiners anymore. I didn't care. So, I think Joan Clark decided that I should come over - I was only supposed to be there for two years anyway and I was there about eighteen months. They had found a job for me, to do an in-depth study on the handicapped. So I moved over to the Director General's office, and I spent about six weeks researching the handicapped, hiring the handicapped in the Foreign Service. It was interesting. I came to the conclusion that, yes, they could be political officers and they could be economic officers, but they couldn't be consular officers because you couldn't do notarial if you're blind.

Q: You're talking about blind?

BARNHART: Well, any kind of handicapped. Equally we can't force other countries to build ramps if they're in a wheelchair. How would you like your administrative officer to have any kind of a handicap if an evacuation had to be done in a hurry? I mean, there were all kinds of reasons. But, you see, if you were blind, the government had to hire a reader and pay them, so you could sit and they could read the cables and you could dictate an answer, I guess, which means why don't you just hire the reader. But anyway, it was an interesting study. Meanwhile, I looked around the Department, and I found several vacancies that were coming up that summer. Someone recommended the Refugee Bureau - wonderful. I wouldn't have thought about it, but it really was a very good assignment.

Q: Let's go back to the recruitment of minorities and women. You mentioned the mid- career program. Were there studies done, while you were doing this, of the junior officers? One, I think you were talking about blacks mainly?

BARNHART: Yes, and Hispanics. Q: That was the real focus, wasn't it?

BARNHART: It was blacks and, by then, Hispanics, Asians. You had the fall of Indochina, so you were getting more and more, but the Asians were not. It was predominantly black. But there were studies done. I had the list beginning in 1967. We had maintained statistics on exactly who came into the junior officer corps by way of an oral exam. It was becoming more and more clear, I think, by then to the Board of Examiners that if they hadn't done decent on the written, they just couldn't pass the orals. But I think initially they were probably a lot lighter on them way back in the '60s and '70s.

Q: I sort of had the impression that there was considerable effort to get minorities in as junior officers, but once they were in, it was sort of sink or swim and mostly they sank.

BARNHART: That's right. By 1980 they had found that you could go back, and ask where is this person that came in '67, how many are still in the Service? And the statistics proved that - I don't remember them exactly - quite a number were no longer in. They last only one or two years in the service, and those that stayed hadn't been promoted very much, maybe one grade. Also, some of these officers had some trouble in consular positions. There again you get someone more likely, maybe from a poor background, to be perhaps more influenced by money. I don't know, but there were several of them that I knew personally. One, though, was on the Board of Examiners himself. He had done quite well in the consular service. He was a mid-career consular officer, he was black, and he got in trouble. He was put in jail in Miami.

Q: Well, when you say he gets in trouble, this usually means sellinvisas?

BARNHART: Selling visas, yes. Sort of like your Mackananshea.

Q: This was Vernon Mackananshea, who had been Consul General?

BARNHART: Yes, that was Mackananshea, in La Paz, I think, yes. And he ended up marrying a Colombian. He was one of the first ones. When he came in to get expeditious naturalization for her, he brought in all his immigrant visa papers. He knew the immigration officers in Miami, and instead of them sending them and going through the bureaucracy, he had them all right in hand. I guess I learned one thing about the consular work. You follow the rules reasonably strictly, but you also use a little bit of common sense. I suspect I've issued maybe a half dozen tourist visas to a dozen tourists that I really had questions about. One that I remember was to a Thai woman who had been taking care of, working for, an AID family, and the wife had incurable cancer. They were bringing her back to the United States. They didn't know how much longer she would live, and there were little children, and they needed this attendant who had been taking care of her there. And I thought, well, she's not a threat to security, and it was humanitarian. A couple of times I've done that sort of thing, but only in a case like that. Normally you don't do that sort of thing. It's all fine that you are the one in charge, and you are the visa officer. You may be the lowest junior officer but you're taught that it's your word and your word only. You have the right to say yes or no. But, as I say, I learned, but once when I was in Jerusalem, I fought Congressman Rooney.

Q: Who was in charge of State Department finances.

BARNHART: That's right, exactly.

Q: You don't fight Congressman Rooney.

BARNHART: Well, it was such a blatant case. One member, the husband, had gone to the States as a tourist and stayed on adjusted status or was in the process of adjusting. Two or three of the kids had gone, and they also had applied to adjust status. And now the wife and the last two little kids wanted to go as tourists. No way. But we went back and forth on cables, and actually I did kind of win that, because we waited until he could file a petition. She went as an immigrant. Looking back on it, I wasted a lot of time, and that's not worth it.

Q: Well, now, you were with the Refugee Office from '82 to when?

BARNHART: '82 to the end of '84, two years. I was there a little longer. They wanted me to stay on. I decided to retire. My father was in a nursing home. The only post that I would have been willing to accept at that point was Bermuda. And that was when they decided to put a political appointee down there. I don't know whether I would have had a chance at it, but I really couldn't find anyplace I wanted to go. So I retired, and I stayed on as a consultant for four years.

Q: In the Refugee Bureau, what particular things were you dealinwith?

BARNHART: I was in charge of the admissions program, keeping all the statistics and data, getting ready to go up to the Hill every year and ask for X numbers, refugee admissions numbers, and justifying why we needed more for this group than that group. It was basically keeping track of all that and how they were processed. I also dealt with the voluntary agencies because they wanted more numbers. Mainly, it was up to Congress each year, and we'd write huge briefing books. The one admissions program that was separate was what we called ODP. That was the group that was coming out of Vietnam through the Orderly Departure Program via Bangkok. We were broken down just like the Department, geographically.

Q: Within the Department, was the allocation of how many refugeeone particular area would get political?

BARNHART: We consulted with the geographic bureaus, but Refugee Bureau did it primarily. You would let them know, but they weren't that interested. HA was interested.

Q: HA being humanitarian rights?

BARNHART: Human Affairs, although they've all been renamed. But we had another office that really dealt solely with the voluntary agencies. Primarily we just did a lot of research and figuring where the agencies were needed. For years we didn't worry about the Soviets, because the Soviet government was not letting people out, and when they did, it would be a handful. Some years before, they had let out loads and loads of people, Armenians particularly but also a lot of Russian Jewish. In the early '70s, they suddenly cracked down and made them have an exit permit, so the few that got out would go to Vienna, and the Jewish people got out with visas to Israel, issued by the Swiss. But they'd get to Vienna, and we had freedom of choice. There were different programs for different groups, compared with the Asians. Well, the Asian set-up was different, because the Asian set-up, we controlled that. The voluntary agencies did the paperwork, but we really controlled the Asian admissions program, and clearances, setting each case by case, and who's entitled and who isn't. The voluntary agencies in Asia would get the paperwork together, but then our Refugee Office would screen the people, whereas over in Europe you had voluntary agencies set up there for years and years, namely Tolstoy, the International Rescue Committee, etc. They did all the screening and our embassies were not really involved that much - occasionally with a little paperwork. It was handled by the voluntary agencies there.

Q: What was your impression of the voluntary agencies?

BARNHART: It was okay. Some of them were better than others. They all had their own agendas. International Rescue Committee was reasonably easy to deal with, and Tolstoy was too. The Lutherans were good. The Catholics were a little more aggressive, shall we say, and I think there were about seven or eight of them. I used to go to New York and meet with them frequently, and they'd come down here. As I said, there were different admissions programs depending on the part of the world. In Africa, we had a refugee officer there and not too much in the way of voluntary agencies. There may have been one volunteer agency. In Asia, voluntary agencies got together, and if you were going to have an office in Bangkok, then we get Hong Kong and we get Singapore. They split up the agencies. Over in Europe you might have five of them in Vienna. When the Russians would come out, they'd all be down around the train. "Come to the United States, come to the United States. They'll sponsor you."

Q: What about Haitian refugees? Did they raise any particulaproblem during your time there?

BARNHART: Not really, no. And the Cubans didn't raise too much. ARA in general was reasonably quiet when I was there. We had a small program with few Cubans that would come in through the program. Many of them came in through immigrant visas. That was the other thing that we did, eventually, with the Southeast Asian people. When I went to Bangkok on TDY, I was appalled at how many visa petitions there were in the files, and the refugee people there had set up the files by the date of application. Someone applied as a refugee, and they were in this camp or this camp or the other camp, and we first heard about it when they applied to enter the States in 1978. So that's the file we have. Well, now, by this time, by 1982, there were petitions filed for a lot of them, but they had not kept the petitions in any way as a consular officer would. They didn't care. And it was easier to process them as refugees as opposed to visas. But we tried to break that and get Embassy Bangkok particularly involved in handling the visa work.

Q: Were boat people still coming out?

BARNHART: Yes, not as many but some. A lot of the boat people, more and more from Vietnam, were getting over to Hong Kong. That's still where there are problems now. Some of them were from North Vietnam. They were economic migrants, and Hong Kong wanted to get rid of them. The British wouldn't take them. That was the other thing with the Refugee Bureau. We don't have to take all the refugees, so we met with the Brits. The Canadians, the Australians, and Scandinavians would take a few, handicapped primarily, which was nice, and Germany. We really followed how many refugees went where, and we pushed governments if they didn't take their fair share.

Q: You said you dealt with Congress. Was Congress basically as unit receptive or were they really trying to keep things small?

BARNHART: No, they were receptive. Back when I went into the Refugee Bureau, there was a Coordinator for Refugee Affairs, which was a Presidential appointee who technically was not even in the Refugee Bureau but reported to the President. Douglas was one of them, I think, and Julia Taft. So, they had the ear of Congress. Remember, there's a lot of money that goes to the states with refugees. The voluntary agencies get the first 90 days of funding, then HHS money went to the states for the first three years, and thereafter they fall under the welfare guidelines of the state, and they differ. California, of course, Southeast Asians loved - weather wise it was good, everything was good there - and they paid the biggest benefits. I looked at a couple of refugees when I was out there, and they couldn't afford to go to work because they were getting more money than they could have made with all the welfare. But down South, the refugees in Nashville would go get a job immediately with Opryland and English language training on the side and bus to work and back. Of course, they had special interest groups, too, and they were the ones that would control how many overall refugee numbers you would get per year and the breakdown for we'd have to go up each year, and it got to the point where they said, "the different areas. So Well, you know, we brought in the majority. Remember, this was '82, '83, '84. Aren't we finished yet with Asians? So they cut the numbers back each year - not with the Soviets. They would have been happy to go back and let in thousands upon thousands of Soviets, because of the Jewish lobby particularly. We really tried to force them when I was there to go to Israel, but they didn't want to go to Israel. Israel wanted them. I loved it when Israel finally opened relations with Russia and one of their biggest points was that they wanted rights for El-Al to land in Moscow. They would then pick up the refugees and take them down. Whereas when I was there, they were coming out by train to Vienna, and then eventually El-Al, before they got rights in Bulgaria. If you could get the refugees to Bulgaria, you could load them on an El-Al plane. There were all kinds of special interests in this thing. But it really was a fun, fun job. I did a lot of traveling. As I say, I think I went to every consular conference there was, plus when we had the Refugee Bureau, we had our own conferences once a year. Toward the end we were in Hong Kong. We tried to combine them with the consular, Joan Clark - I remember when she came in...

Q: Consular affairs?

BARNHART: Well, she had a consular conference there. Then we followed it up with the refugee conference, and a lot of the same people stayed because we would use the consular people. I remember when she came to Geneva, she had just been named to the Consular Bureau as Assistant Secretary, and she didn't know much about the refugee thing. She and Ed Kruzer came to the refugee conference we had in Geneva. I think that was her first introduction to the refugee business. Her big point even then was to get more consular officers in refugee work. I talked to her and said, "If you come up with some good ones, they'll take them. They're always looking." Ron Somerville was one. That was a place to put people that you can't use.

Q: So you retired then in what?

BARNHART: December of '84 I retired, and then I immediately stayed on four more years with the Refugee. They had me on as their retired annuitant. It was great. I made more money than the people who went to Freedom of Information. On special projects, for two years, I agreed to go around with the team and check refugee resettlement in the United States, but I would not go up to Rochester, New York, in the wintertime; I also would go to New Orleans. I pretty much would pick places that I hadn't been to.

Q: What was your impression of refugee resettlement in the States?

BARNHART: Now, that was all done by the voluntary agencies - and I wasn't the only one, they always had teams - and it was pretty good. The Catholics did a good job. They had a bigger network than, say, Tolstoy, but they had a bigger caseload, and they had some very serious workers. I mean, they really tried. The idea was to get these people off of welfare and into jobs. The real push was by the voluntary agencies. The Refugee Bureau got the money. Our appropriation, as I recall, was through USAID rather than the State budget. But anyway, we provided the money to the voluntary agencies to handle the first 90 days of refugee resettlement, and after the first 90 days, then the welfare came from the states but with money from HHS. We went around and monitored them to see how they were doing with resettlement within the first 90 days. Were they getting medical clearances? Had they registered at the welfare office? Were they in English language training if they needed it? Had they gotten a job? Had they applied for a job? What about their health, if they had health problems? We really went over everything. We had a big checklist for the agencies. It was interesting. The refugees are very clever people. The state of California, I think, is second to Alaska in welfare benefits, education, everything, whereas in the states of Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, with their meager welfare benefits, there is an incentive to go to work. You can do better by working. Whereas out in California, they say, "I'm going to stay on welfare, because I get $60,000 a year on welfare for a family of four and I can't make that yet." So it depends. We also did have a program, finally, while I was there that we tried with impacted areas. We were responsible for locating those areas where there were too many refugees and identifying those areas that would take more refugees. We don't want all of the Indochinese going to Orange County. And the Hmong, we've got some up in the colder places, like Montana. But it was interesting, Arizona wanted more. I went to Arizona - this was after I had retired - and both Tucson and Phoenix had very good programs. They put the refugees through Job Corps. They had a wonderful resettlement, the local state agency. Actually the voluntary agencies backed away after 90 days. Then it was more or less up to the state. So they had a good program, and they wanted more. We made certain that the voluntary agencies sent more people, but they pretty much said where they were going, depending on where they had family. A lot of them - I think it was the Hmong - learned fast. They're a special case. They're a special breed because, number one, you can't teach them English. They're lucky if they can speak their own language. But not reading and writing - they just don't have those skills, not all of them. General Van Pou, I think, was head of the Hmong. He came to the United States. He came over with his wife. He was bounced out of Laos, but he was not going to stay in the United States. He was just coming over to look into resettlement for his fellows, and they convinced me that he would come back.

Q: This is the CIA?

BARNHART: Yes. But he wanted to travel with his wife, his third or fourth wife, and, I think, one child. He did leave the States. He didn't stay, but he would go around visiting groups. I don't know whether he's back in the United States or not. They, too, preferred California. Some of them would agree to be resettled. From overseas the voluntary agency divvied them up and said, "Now you're going here and here and here and here. We have an agency here." Some of them, after we said where to send them, got assigned to Arizona, for example, and New Mexico, and the next thing you know there's a bus from the San Fernando Valley, where there a lot of them, that comes down and picks up all these people and takes them into California. So it worked up to a point, this resettlement planning, but not 100 percent.

Q: But still, it must have been satisfying to work with the RefugeProgram before and after retirement?

BARNHART: Oh, yes, it really was a good job, and ranks high amonall my Foreign Service assignments.

End of interview